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ABSTRACT

To provide a rationale and policy agenda for early childhood programs in Arizona and to illuminate issues and concerns that surround decisions regarding preschool programs, this report reviews the background of the current preschool movement, describes the efforts of other states to establish preschool education, and discusses and makes recommendations on options and policy issues. Section I provides background information on the states' increasing interest in early childhood education since 1980. Section II discusses state funding patterns for preschool education. Section III discusses six basic policy questions: (1) Which children should be served? (2) How should preschool programs be administered? (3) What funding mechanisms should be used for Arizona's preschool programs? (4) What should programs cost per child? (5) What are the essential elements of a quality program? and (6) What forms of teacher preparation and certification should be required? Section IV explores related considerations, including the primary grade curriculum, parent participation, assessment practices, and staff certification, development, and training. Table 1 provides a summary of state initiatives in early childhood education. Task force members and sub-committee participants are listed. (RH)

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THE SUPERINTENDENT'S TASK FORCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Report to the Arizona Board of Education

C. Diane Bishop
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Arizona Department of Education
August 1989

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Foreword

In the 1980's, children under age five have clearly made it into the national spotlight. The National Governors' Association Task Force on Children believes that current investment in the education of at-risk young children is linked to the nation's future international competitiveness and calls for a comprehensive approach coordinated with affordable child care (1). The National Conference of State Legislatures reports that legislators on human services and education committees rank child care and early childhood education as top issues for the coming year (2). States are becoming leaders in developing early childhood programs to the point where twenty-eight states are currently funding pre-school initiatives, almost all enacted in recent years (3).

In order to provide a rationale and policy agenda for early childhood programs for Arizona, and to illuminate issues and concerns that surround the decisions regarding preschool programs, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction, C. Diane Bishop appointed a Task Force of concerned and knowledgeable individuals from the public and private sectors. Members of this Task Force spent six months researching, deliberating, and developing a response to the well documented need for quality preschool programs for Arizona's at-risk young children.*

The purpose of this report is to describe that rationale and lay the foundation for the State Board of Education and the

* "preschool" refers to programs for three, four, and non-kindergarten five year-old-children. "Early Childhood programs" can include programs for children from birth to age eight.

Arizona Department of Education to assume pivotal leadership roles in developing early childhood programs for at-risk preschool children in Arizona. The report reviews the background of the current preschool movement, describes the efforts of other states to establish preschool education, and discusses and makes recommendations on options and policy issues that must be confronted.

The focus of the report is on preschool education. However, since quality preschool programs are not like an inoculation, Task Force members also made recommendations regarding critical primary grade (K-3) issues. These issues include the need to resolve the dichotomy between current knowledge of how young children learn which should be active and personally meaningful, with the present over-reliance on paper, pencil, and ditto sheets; the need to substantively involve and empower parents in the education of their young children; the recognition that some current K-3 assessment practices can have a serious and detrimental effect on the curriculum and children; and the acknowledgment of the well researched principle that teachers of young children should have specialized training in child development and early childhood education.

Task Force members thank State Superintendent, C. Diane Bishop, for her vision and leadership in creating the Task Force and for expanding upon the work of the Task Force through additional research and policy direction in this report. By bringing the Task Force together to deliberate and struggle with

the issues of early education for Arizona's youngest citizens, she has given substance to the recognition that what happens to our children in their earliest years will determine the future of our state.

Section I

BACKGROUND

Over the past ten years, early childhood education has risen rapidly on the agenda of many states. Prior to 1980 only eight states had passed legislation or provided state revenues for pre-kindergarten programs. By 1989, twenty-eight states had such programs. The main forces driving this wave of interest appear to be as follows (4).

Education Reform

As the focus of education reform shifted from high school to elementary school, the importance of preparation for school was increasingly recognized. Many of the new state early childhood initiatives respond directly to school readiness concerns. The National Governor's Association has issued two Task Force reports on education reform, "Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education" and "Focus on The First Sixty Months," both of which call for state investment in pre-kindergarten programs.

Business Concern

Across the country, private-sector support for early childhood programs has been important. The impetus for this support has come from the Committee for Economic Development (CED), an organization of 250 business leaders and educators from across the nation that decided a few years ago to put the issue of early childhood education for at-risk children at the top of its agenda.

The seeds of this decision were sown with the CED concern about the critical role that education plays in enhancing the competitiveness of the U.S. economy, its productivity, and its economic growth as well as the role it plays in a free, democratic society. As the committee looked at the first wave of education reform calling for higher standards and tougher graduation requirements, more homework, longer school days and school years, it because apparent they had all but ignored the plight of "children in need" -- the educationally disadvantaged and very few addressed the early years. The committee's 1987 report, Children in Need, warns that if we don't change the way we deal with children who are born into poverty, we will not only impoverish these children, we will impoverish our nation-economically, politically, and culturally. The committee report goes on to call preschool education an "extraordinary economic buy," adding, "it would be hard to imagine that society could find a higher yield for a dollar of investment than that found in preschool programs for at-risk children."

Child Care

Traditionally, the state's role in child care has been to provide services to low-income or welfare mothers. Today parents at all economic levels also need child care. According to figures available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1985), nearly half of all infants, more than half of all children ages three through five, and close to seventy percent of school-age children (ages six to fourteen) have mothers in the labor force. These figures represent dramatic increases and are rising.

Child Care is the fourth largest budget expenditure for families at all economic levels, generally following food, housing, and taxes (5). Weekly costs of center-based care range from $40 per child to $120. Families annually spend an average of $3,000 per child for full-time child care, equivalent to one-third of the income for a family of three at the poverty level (6).

Today's parents need both education and care for their young children. Care of children while their parents work is a function that any early childhood program can fulfill, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the number of hours and days the program operates.

Long-Term Benefits To Children And Society

The most effective drop-out prevention measure we have is early childhood education for three- and four-year-olds. The evidence from longitudinal research on the impact of early childhood programs on disadvantaged children is compelling. The most well known of these is the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, which was begun in 1962 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. This study is possibly the most famous preschool experiment because of its extensive follow-up studies and reports. Three- and four-year-old children from impoverished low-income black families received a two-and-a half hour organized educational program, which included extensive parent involvement, extended over two school years. At the age of nineteen, twice as many program participants as control children were employed, attending college, or receiving further training. Their high school graduation rate was one-third higher, their arrest rates forty percent lower, and

their teen pregnancy rates forty-two percent lower (7). An economic analysis found the return on the dollar amounted to nearly six times the cost of a one-year program or three times of a two-year program. From reduced costs for special education alone, the savings were enough to reimburse taxpayers for the cost of the one-year program. Additional benefits came from savings in costs of crime and delinquency, savings to the welfare system, and increased taxes paid by those who attended the program. The researchers concluded that the overall return for each invested dollar was $4.75 (8).

There is equally compelling evidence from other longitudinal studies such as those reported by the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (9). The Consortium analyzed data from twelve experimental preschool intervention programs conducted during the 1960's and found that:

> **"High quality early education programs are likely to benefit both low-income children and the larger society by: reducing the number of children in later costly special education programs in schools, helping children avoid grade failure, increasing children's math achievement score at fourth grade and IQ scores at least up to age 13, and influencing aspects of children's and mothers' achievement orientation."**

These varied forces, educational reform, business concern, child care needs, and long-term benefits are strong and intertwined with one another. Alone and in combinations, they have already resulted in new policies and programs and will lead to still more.

Integration of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

Although child care and preschool programs are thought to meet different goals - child care to enable parents to work; preschool to provide stimulating learning experiences for young children - these goals are inexorably bound together. Both child care and preschool programs serve young children who have the same basic developmental needs. Children cannot be well cared for without learning, and they cannot be educated well without being properly cared for.

While much of the renewed interest in early childhood has focused on the public schools, early childhood programs for three- and four-year-olds take many forms and are referred to by many different names (e.g., day care center, pre-kindergarten, Head Start, preschool, nursery school, child care center, playschool, child development center, early learning center). Regardless of the name, good programs for children, whether "child care" or "preschool," are quite similar and the ingredients necessary for quality are precisely the same. Indeed there is a foundation of empirical evidence and a broad agreement on what practices constitute quality (10). The most easily defined elements are group size and child/staff ratios. For preschool children the group size should not exceed twenty children with a ratio of at least one staff member for every ten children. Other critical elements of quality are staff training specifically related to child development or early childhood education and low staff turnover rates.

Section II

STATE FUNDING PATTERNS FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

At least twenty-eight states currently provide funding to preschool programs, primarily for half-day programs for three-and four-year-olds (11). Table 1, taken from the Public School Early Childhood Study of Bank Street College, is a summary of state initiatives in preschool education. All totaled, states are spending about $225 million on preschool programs for about 150,000 children, an average of $1,500 per child. However, states are a long way from providing universally available preschool programs. From that amount only ten states appropriated more then $10 million annually. Texas ($46 million), California ($36 million) and New York ($27 million) provide the largest total amounts although the per child expenditure varies greatly (12).

In all states except Iowa and Washington, these programs are administered by the state Department of Education. Most state programs target children likely to have difficulties in school. These children include the low-income and economically disadvantaged, as well as those with limited English language skills. States directing their preschool dollars to at-risk children include Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington (13).

Table 1 A SUMMARY OF STATE INITIATIVES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

STATE	POPULATION SERVED	HOURS OF OPERATION	NO. OF CHILDREN SERVED	RESOURCES	RATIOS	ECE TRAINING	METHOD OF FUNDING
ALASKA enacted 1983	3- and 4-year-olds Head Start eligibility	half day 5 villages	45 (FY87)	$197,000 (FY88) $250,000 (FY87)	unknown	unknown	targeted grants for Head Start-like programs
CALIFORNIA enacted 1966	3- to 5-years olds (low income)	half day, 185 contracts 500+ sites	19,221 (FY88)	$35.5 million (FY88 estimate)	1:8	unknown	reimbursement on average daily attendance; contracts with school district which may subcontract; grants may also go directly to private nonprofits
DELAWARE enacted 1986	4-year-olds	half day, 3 pilot programs (FY88)	99 (FY88)	$189,000 (FY88)	1:8	unknown	competitive grants school districts only
FLORIDA state funds used to supplement migrant program since 1981	3- and 4-year-olds migrant children	full school day 18 programs	2,579 (FY86) 2,540 (FY87)	$2.9 million (FY88)	1:10	no	districts may subcontract to nonprofits; 60% state funds, 40% federal funds
FLORIDA enacted 1986 begun 1986-87	3- and 4-year-olds targeted at-risk only	half or full day incl'g full working day, 19 districts (FY88)	1,000 (FY88)	$1.6 million (FY88)	local option 1:10 recommended	yes	project grants to school districts; may subcontract
ILLINOIS enacted 1985 begun 1/86	3- to 5-year-olds at risk of academic failure	half or full day incl'g full working day 97 programs (FY88)	7,400 (FY87)	$12.7 million (FY88)	1:8 preferred may not exceed 1:10	yes	project grants; no local match; may subcontract to nonprofits
KENTUCKY enacted 1986	3- and 4-year-olds at-risk	half and full day PACE 12 districts, 18 classrooms; EIG 3 programs (FY87-88)	270 PACE (FY87-88) 280 EIG (FY87-88)	$900,000 PACE (FY88) $232,123 EIG (FY87-88)	1:7.5 PACE unknown EIG	no PACE unknown EIG	competitive grants to school districts; EIG may be subcontracted; PACE eligibility based on district with 60% or more adults without high school diploma
LOUISIANA enacted 1985 begun fall 1985	4-year-olds at-risk	most full day 50 of 66 districts 71 classes (FY88)	1,272 (FY88)	$1.8 million (FY88)	1:10 with aide 1:15 without	no	project grants; up to 4 per district; no local match

(From: The Public School Early Childhood Study:
The State Survey -
Bank Street College of Education)

Table 1 continued

STATE	POPULATION SERVED	HOURS OF OPERATION	NO. OF CHILDREN SERVED	RESOURCES	RATIOS	ECE TRAINING	METHOD OF FUNDING
MAINE Head Start expansion enacted 1984	3- to 5-year-olds at-risk Head Start requirement	most half day some 2 days/week 13 programs	724 (FY88)	$1.9 million (FY88)	1:7.5 (Head Start ratios)	yes, Head Start requirement	formula allocations
MAINE enacted 1984	4-year-olds	half day 5 districts (FY88)	167		1:18 recommended	no	school districts only reimbursed under school aid formula after second year of program
MARYLAND enacted 1979	4-year-olds at-risk	half day; 15 districts 72 classes (FY88)	2,820 (FY88)	$3.3 million (FY88)	1:10	yes	project grants; selection based on low 3rd grade test scores
MASSACHUSETTS enacted 1985 begun fall 1986	3- to 5-year-olds low-income	half or full day, incl'g full working day 121 programs (FY87) 56 pre-K and day care		$10.3 million (FY88)	1:7.5	yes	competitive grants to districts; may subcontract; 75% of funds to low-income districts
MICHIGAN pilot project began Jan. 86	4-year-olds at-risk	most half day 29 programs (FY87)	800 (FY87)	$300,000 (FY88) $100,000 (FY87)	1:8	yes	competitive grants to school districts; 30% local match; may subcontract with school operated Head Start only
MICHIGAN enacted 1987	4-year-olds living in districts meeting funding formula requirements	half day		$2 million (FY88)	1:8	yes	only school districts which meet state funding formula requirements
NEW JERSEY since 1903	4-year-olds	half day 93 school districts (FY86)	5,794 (FY87)	$6.9 million (estimated FY87)	1:25	no but most teachers have nursery school endorsement	school districts regular school aid formula based on enrollment
NEW JERSEY enacted 1987 to begin Nov. 87	3- to 5 year olds at-risk Head Start requirement	full working day full year		$1 million (FY88)	1:10	yes	allocation by county & competitive grants to programs; priority to Head Start but school districts and nonprofits may apply; matching requirement determined by county,range 10-25%

(From: The Public School Early Childhood Study:
The State Survey -
Bank Street College of Education)

Table 1 continued

STATE	POPULATION SERVED	HOURS OF OPERATION	NO. OF CHILDREN SERVED	RESOURCES	RATIOS	ECE TRAINING	METHOD OF FUNDING
NEW YORK enacted 1966	3- and 4-year-olds 90% low-income	most half day 90 districts (FY88)	12,000 (FY88)	$27 million (FY88)	1:7.5	no	project grants via a proposal process; 11% local match; new programs limited to half day only
OHIO enacted 1985-86	3- to 5-year-olds	half or full day pilot models; 8 districts (FY87) 3programs(FY88)		$18,000 (FY88)	1:12 (3 years) 1:14 (4-5 year-olds)	no	project grants via RFP to school districts; new programs half day only
OKLAHOMA enacted 1980	4-year-olds	half or full day 37 programs (FY88)	1,400 (FY88)	$832,275 (FY88)	1:10	yes	project grants via RFP to school districts; maximum grant per district $27,000 (FY88); private schools may also apply
OREGON passed 1987 implemented 1988-89	3- and 4-years old 80% must meet Head Start eligibility	half day	300	$1.1 million (FY88-89)	unknown	unknown	competitive grants to school districts which may subcontract; direct contracts permitted
PENNSYLVANIA since 1965	4-year-olds	half day 9 districts (FY87)	3,260 (FY87)	$1.7 million (FY87 estimate)	local option	unknown	state aid formula for kindergarten used
SO. CAROLINA enacted 1984; Chapter I funding since 1971	4-year-olds with deficient "readiness" based on individual assessment	half day; 86 districts (FY88)	10,715 (FY88)	$10.9 million (FY88)	1:10 recommended	yes	allocation to districts based on students "not ready"; districts may subcontract
TEXAS enacted 1984 began fall 1985	4-year-olds low-income or limited English proficiency	half day; 405 districts (FY86)	48,000(87) 54,493 (88)	$37.6 million(FY87) $46.2 million (FY88)	1:22	yes, with exemp-tions	formula allocation; matching grant based on local property value
VERMONT enacted 1987	3- and 4-year-olds at risk, low income, limited English proficiency; other handicap'g conditions	half or full day including full work day	250 (FY88 est.)	$500,000 (FY88) maximum $30,000 per grant	1:10	no	competitive grants based on RFP; preference to communities without other early childhood programs; grants to school districts which may subcontract; direct contracts permitted

(From: The Public School Early Childhood Study:
The State Survey -
Bank Street College of Education)

Table 1 continued

STATE	POPULATION SERVED	HOURS OF OPERATION	NO. OF CHILDREN SERVED	RESOURCES	RATIOS	ECE TRAINING	METHOD OF FUNDING
WASHINGTON enacted 1985	4-year-olds Head Start eligibility	half day	2,000 (FY88)	$4.7 million (FY88) $6.2 million (FY89)	1:6	yes	competitive grants to school districts; Head Start and private nonprofits
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA enacted 1968	4-year-olds	117 full day + 27 half day (FY87) 170 full day (FY88)	3,444 (FY88)	$12.2 million (FY88)	1:10 half day 1:15 full day with aide	yes	local district regular school aid formula; used Chapter I funds prior to 1982
WEST VIRGINIA programs operated since 1972 *	3- and 4-year-olds at-risk and low income	half day and full day 6 programs *	215 (FY86)	$258,574 (FY86)	1:15	yes	4 programs are run by the DOE as fiscal agent; 2 are run by counties under contract with DOE
WISCONSIN enacted 1985	4-year-olds	half day 25 districts (FY87)	5,850 (FY88 estimate)	$4.3 million (FY88)	1:20 recommended	no, local option	state aid formula to local districts; average local contribution is 52%

* School code revised in 1983 to permit local county school boards to establish prekindergarten programs for children under age 5. The programs listed are those not primarily for handicapped children.

(From: The Public School Early Childhood Survey:
The State Survey -
Bank Street College of Education)

In some cases (Delaware, Louisiana, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), preschool programs receive state money as part of a state school finance formula and operate in the public schools. In Florida, Iowa, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington, however, preschool programs are funded through grants. In these states, the public schools, child care centers, Head Start programs, or other agencies are eligible as recipients (14).

At least eight states supplement federal Head Start programs (Head Start is funded by eighty percent federal and twenty percent nonfederal match). Hawaii and Washington contribute state money for the required match. Other states' (Alaska, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Rhode Island) contributions are designed to expand or improve services.

Most of the state funded preschool programs are provided by public school districts. However, about half of the states permit other community agencies to operate these programs.

The content of preschool programs differs greatly from state to state. About half mandate comprehensive developmental programs similar to the Head Start model. Others have no curricular requirements; still others focus solely on academics. Some are targeted at a very specific need, such as the program in Texas geared toward four-year-olds who cannot speak or understand English. A few states fund parental education programs instead of direct service to preschool children. States are spending an average of $1,500 per child, considerably less than the Head Start average of $2,600 (15).

For states that have developed or expanded preschool education programs based on the cost-benefit studies, to expect the same kinds of results, requires that implemented programs must be of similar quality and intensity - with low teacher/child ratios, a professional child development staff, and strong parental involvement. To make the investment pay off, it appears that states must be willing to invest the necessary dollars.

Section III

POLICY DETERMINATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ARIZONA

Most of the recent state preschool programs are small pilot projects and not commitments to large-scale funding. Exceptions to this would include California, which operates an impressive array of preschool programs funded from state and local revenues. New York has also funded preschool programs since 1966. Substantial confusion surrounds these programs--their operational nature, their costs, their effects, their quality, and even their basic objectives. Turf battles persist, and the major professional communities with an interest in young children--educators in the public schools, early childhood educators, and the child-care community--often battle each other over basic philosophical objectives and methodologies, as well as over economic issues associated with jobs and administrative control (16). Yet, despite these problems, the Arizona State Board of Education (State Board) and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) have a rare opportunity. There is no official preschool/early childhood education policy in the state, and the State Board and ADE can begin writing with nearly a blank slate and learn from the successes and mistakes of others.

Options And Policy Decisions

Arizona faces many critical choices, such as which children should be served, and in what types of programs? Most of the programs that have been enacted by states are half-day preschool programs for at-risk four-year-olds, but each decision underlying

the structure of the program; the age range of the children to be served, whether all children or only specific target groups should be included, and whether part-day or full-day programs would be available, involve a great array of options as demonstrated in Table 2.

The general policy decisions on which the State Board and ADE must reach consensus are in six primary areas:

1. **Which children should be served?**

   Concerns relating to equity and the high cost of quality programs have fueled much of the discussion on whether to provide programs to targeted groups, to make these programs universally available, or available on a sliding fee basis. Arguments for targeting services to high-risk and the neediest populations principally center on costs and the fact that the benefits of preschool education to low-income children are more starkly evident than those to wealthier children. Arguments for inclusiveness center on the concern that by increasing services to the neediest without addressing the need to ensure racially and economically integrated environments is to reinforce a segregated system of preschool education. Furthermore, it appears that the programs that fare best, are ones that are available to anyone who needs them, irrespective of income, and therefore free of stigma (17).

TABLE 2

POLICY CHOICES

1. Who shall be served?

Age groups: 4-year-olds
3 to 4-year-olds
toddlers and infants ages 0-2

Target groups: Low-income children
Educationally "at-risk" children
Limited English-speaking children
All children

2. Program duration/hours of operation

Morning or half-day preschool (2-3 hours)
Full school day (5-6 hours)
Full working-day (8-10 hours)
Morning pre-school plus after-school program

3. Funding level, services provided, and funding sources

Level -- Spending per child ranges between $1,000 and $6,000
Capital outlay funds
Services provided: Basic care/instruction only
Transportation
Health screening
Health care
Psychological screening
Counseling
Parent education
Social Services/information to parents
Revenue sources: State revenues only
State revenues plus required local revenues
State revenues plus parent fees

4. Funding mechanisms

Expand existing programs
Expand state tax credits
Project funding via proposals:
school districts only eligible
school districts eligible, with subcontracts allowed
districts and community-based organizations eligible
Formula funding to school districts:
existing school aid formula
new aid formula specifically for early childhood
Formula funding to districts, towns, cities, or counties

Table 2 (continued)
Policy Choices

Voucher mechanisms:
- vouchers to parents, unrestricted
- vouchers to parents, restricted to programs of specified quality
- vouchers administered by programs (vendor payments)

California model: various funding mechanisms for different programs

5. <u>State administrative agency</u>

State department of education (perhaps with a new office of early childhood education)
State department of education, with an interagency coordinating council
State welfare agency
State agency that licenses child care, or that currently administers Head Start
State office for children
New state agency

6. <u>Quality control</u>

Adult/child ratios
Teacher and aide salary levels
Teacher certification and preparation
Licensing requirements
Technical assistance

7. <u>Teacher certification and preparation</u>

Early childhood training required
Elementary teaching credential acceptable or required
Sub-B.A. credentials (certificates, A.A. degrees, and CDA) acceptable or required
B.A. required

(From: Young Children Face The States:
Issues and Options for Early Childhood Programs -
Center For Policy Research In Education)

Recommendation For Consideration

Programs should be available, initially on a pilot basis, for three- and four-year-olds, regardless of income level, on a sliding fee basis.

2. **How should preschool programs be administered?**

There are some states that have considered administering early childhood programs in an independent agency; Washington decided to administer its new preschool program through the Department of Community Affairs (which is responsible for Head Start), partly in the belief that the education department would be unsympathetic to programs for young children. Another approach is that of South Carolina, which has adopted a model of interagency coordination. Although its Department of Education is responsible for operating the preschool program, an interagency coordinating council must approve all plans for the program; its members come from all state agencies which serve children, including the welfare agency.

In most states, however, it is the state Department of Education that is granted the administrative responsibility. However, it is generally agreed that to properly administer preschool programs the state Departments of Education must have sufficient staff who are themselves expert in early childhood programming, as well as the networks necessary to ensure that the

program adheres to model early childhood practices and to bridge the different worlds of early childhood education.

Recommendation for Consideration

- **The State Department of Education should be the administrative agency for early childhood programs and must develop the necessary expertise and networks to ensure quality control over early childhood programs, as well as the necessary coordination with existing preschool programs. The Department must be in a position to provide consultation, workshops, information about model programs, and access to a network of early childhood practitioners.**

- **The State Board should consider expanding the standing K-3 Advisory Committee to include educators, early childhood advocates, welfare officials, and others concerned and expert in programming for preschool children.**

3. **What Funding Mechanism Should Be Used For Arizona's Preschool Programs?**

The federal government is the major source of funding for child care and preschool programs. Federal initiatives include Head Start which serves 6,000 Arizona children (seventeen percent of Arizona's eligible population); the Social Services Block Grant administered out of the Department of Economic Security (DES) which together with state appropriations, subsidizes child care on a sliding fee scale for approximately 16,000 children whose parents earn less than sixty-five percent of the state median income; the Child Care Food Program, administered out of the U.S. Department of Education, which provides funds to

the states to establish and maintain food-service programs and services, in Arizona, approximately 450 child care centers and 1,700 day care homes; and two tax provisions - the dependent care tax credit, which, depending on family income, ranges from twenty percent to thirty percent of child care expenses up to $2,400 a year per child, and the employer child tax provisions, which allow deductions to be made from an employee's salary and used tax-free for child care. And if the Act for Better Child Care currently before congress passes, there is a possibility of serving an additional 14,000 Arizona children.

States that have invested in preschool efforts have recognized that, despite the federal efforts (which have been reduced over the past eight years), low-income children are less than half as likely as higher income children to receive critical preschool experience. According to 1985 statistics from the federal Department of Education, sixty-seven percent of four-year-olds whose families have incomes of $35,000 or more per year participated in preschool programs. In contrast, fewer than thirty-three percent of four-year-olds whose families earn less than $10,000 per year were enrolled in preschool programs.

State mechanisms for investment in preschool education have taken many forms:

1. Twenty-four states including the District of Columbia provide funds for pilot or statewide preschool programs.

2. Eight states and the District of Columbia contribute funds for the Head Start match or provide additional revenues to expand the number of children served and/or improve the quality of service.

3. Two states, Missouri and Minnesota, provide parent education programs in lieu of direct service to preschool children.

Recommendations For Consideration

- The ADE should explore the model of many recent state initiatives that have established state funded pilot projects utilizing project grants. This involves applications by local school districts and community based organizations for state funds based on specific proposals, as well as clear criteria for funding. These grants could then be used either to support programs of specified types--for example, half-day preschool programs, or full-day child care programs with certain educational requirements--or programs unique to localities. In some areas of the state, especially the rural areas, the school system might be the only organization to apply for such grants; but in the metropolitan area several different types of organizations--existing child care programs, social service agencies, minority organizations might apply along with the schools. Allowing a variety of organizations to apply for and receive funds would provide some competition with the schools, and would generate a more diverse set of programs.

- The ADE should also explore the feasibility of recommending state support to supplement the Federal Head Start Program in Arizona.

- The ADE should develop expertise and provide technical assistance to school districts as to how they can wrap child care and preschool into one accessible package utilizing federal and local funding sources. The majority of state funded preschool programs offer half-day sessions and they

stand apart from child care arrangements. That means working parents have to shuttle their children to two or even three facilities a day in order to take advantage of the program. This fragmented day does not work well for children or their parents.

- The ADE should explore possible funding sources for preschool programs. The Task Force discussed the following options:

  - Designate lottery winnings for preschool programs;
  - Increase property taxes;
  - Increase taxes incrementally from 1990 to 2000 until all at-risk three- and four-year-olds are funded;
  - Increase state land available for leasing and commit funds specifically to preschool education;
  - Investigate the possibility of creatively using federal funding earmarked for like kinds of programming;
  - If an education initiative goes forth, consider an early education component.
  - Form business partnerships, possibly through the Arizona Education Foundation.

4. What should programs cost per child?

Given the variation in what teachers are paid, in adult/child ratios, in access to free or reduced cost facilities, in volunteer resources, and in the ancillary services that are provided by programs, it is almost impossible to venture what a "typical" preschool program might cost and the trade-offs between cost and quality are obvious (18). However, a few figures as displayed in Table 3, taken from the Center for Policy Research in Education Report, provide some guidance about the general magnitudes. In these figures, it is important that half-day preschool programs be distinguished from full-day child care programs since their operating hours

TABLE 3

PER PUPIL COSTS OF PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

	Annual Cost 1986 Dollars
Preschools:	
Perry Preschool: $4,818 (1981 dollars)	$6,187
Head Start: $2,808 (1984) (including a 20 percent local match)	$3,047
California Preschools: $10.37/day, 1985-86	$1,883
Child Care:	
National Day Care Study (March 1977)	
Total resources:	
All centers $158/month	$3,467
Publicly-funded centers $185/month	$4,060
Parent-fee centers $109/month	$2,392
Expenditures (excluding donations):	
All centers $138/month	$3,028
Publicly-funded centers $158/month	$3,467
Parent-fee centers $99/month	$2,172
California Children's Centers: $18.56/day, 1985-86	$4,681
California Alternate Payment Programs: $15.90/day	$4,010
Publicly-subsidized Child Care in California (1984-85)	
All programs $17.94/day	$4,525
Lowest-cost program $8.36/day	$2,108
Highest-cost program $24.59/day	$6,202
Public schools K-12	
$2,948/pupil (1982-83)	$3,431

(From: Young Children Face The States: Issues and Options for Early Childhood Programs - Center For Policy Research In Education)

differ so widely. As always, the programs that are considered exemplary - the Perry Preschool program and the California Children's Centers - cost much more than other programs. Exemplary preschool programs with more complete cost-accounting mechanisms, such as Head Start, cost as much as most child care; shorter hours of operation are offset by higher salaries to teachers, a wider array of services, and a tendency to pay teachers for a full-day even when they are with children for a half-day.

One obvious implication of the figures presented in Table 3 needs to be emphasized. The greatest excitement in this country about preschool education was generated by the Perry Preschool program and its 6:1 benefit cost ratio. But, among all early childhood programs for three-and four-year-olds, the Perry Preschool consistently exhibits the highest adult/child ratios, the highest salaries, and the highest costs. It is implausible to believe that in the current budget atmosphere, any state would spend as much as $6,187 per child. However, the evaluations of Head Start and other much less expensive programs have also been positive. "Still, it is senseless to cite evidence from exemplary, high-quality programs and then to enact a program with low spending, low ratios, low salaries, and inadequate teacher preparation" (19).

The possibility of inadvertently enacting low-quality programs illustrates the importance of making explicit decisions about the structure of preschool programs; decisions about ratios, salaries, the training of teachers, etc. In Table 4, the report of the Center for Policy Research in Education presents some possible ways to calculate annual per-child costs based on different combinations of ratios, salaries, and auxiliary services. Utilizing Table 4, it is possible, for example, to specify conditions that lead to annual costs of about $2,000. For example, a preschool program which pays only marginal salaries to teachers (and which has 1:10 adult/child ratio and pays a teacher more than child/care workers but less than elementary teachers) might cost about $2,000 a year. However, with more generous allowances for nonteaching costs and with more reasonable salaries, costs per child increase to a range of $2,700 to $3,500-close to the average.

Recommendation for Consideration

The ADE must make explicit decisions about the quality of program it wants to support. However, as pointed out above, it does not make sense to cite evidence from high-quality programs and then to enact programs with low spending, low ratios, low salaries, and inadequate teacher preparation. The range of $2,700 to $3,500 per childshould be strongly considered.

TABLE 4

OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVE COSTS

Ratios:

RA:	1:20	RC:	1:10
RB:	1:15	RD:	1:6

Teacher salaries:

SA:	$7,300	(minimum wage)
SB:	$12,800	(current average child care teacher)
SC:	$18,600	(average of child care and elementary
SD:	$24,500	(average of elementary school teacher)

Other personnel costs:

AA:	none;	paid by school district
AB:	$373	
AC:	$746	(non-personnel costs of publicly-funded centers, National Day Care Study)

Space costs:

SpA:	none;	paid by school district or church
SpB:	$200/year,	rent donated
SpC:	$417/year	

Materials:

MA:	none;	borrowed from school district or donated
MB:	$130	
MC:	$263	

Other:

OA:	None
OB:	$100
OC:	$219

<u>Annual costs per child under alternative assumptions</u>:

		Salaries			
		SB	SC	SD	
Ratios	1:20	$1,443	1,733	2,028	Other costs:
	1:15	1,656	2,043	2,436	AB, SpB,
	1:10	2,083	2,663	3,253	MB, OB
	1:6	2,936	3,903	4,886	

Table 4 (continued)
OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVE COSTS

NOTE:	Low-moderate costs (with substantial donations): (RC, SB, AB, SpB, MD, OB)	$2,083
	Low-moderate cost with teacher salaries increased to SC:	$2,667
	High/moderate costs (without substantial donations): (RC, SB, AC, SpC, MC, OC)	$2,925
	High/moderate costs with teacher salaries increased to SC:	$3,505
	High cost: (RD, SD, SC, SpC, MD, OC)	$5,728

(From: Young Children Face The States:
Issues and Options for Early Childhood Programs
Center For Policy Research In Education)

5. **What are the essential elements of a quality program?**

Good preschool education is much more than a school readiness program. It reflects a comprehensive vision of support for child development, encompassing teaching practice, relationships with parents, and connections with other community agencies and institutions. The theme that unites good preschool programs is the need to see young children in context rather than simply as "students" in a specific program. From the child's perspective the elements necessary to create good policy are the overall quality of the program and the comprehensiveness of service.

Recommendations for Consideration:

ADE should serve as the catalyst to create and improve preschool programs that have the following characteristics of high quality preschool programs:

- **Small group size- for four-year-olds, for example, between fifteen and twenty children.**
- **Favorable staff/child ratios- for four-year-olds, at least one adult for every ten children.**
- **Well-trained staff - a thorough understanding of theories of child development and of principles of early childhood education, coupled with direct experience working with young children.**
- **Curriculum - a clearly communicated philosophy of education that is based on developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood and that is supported by training and good supervision.**
- **Strong parent participation - frequent communication between parents and teachers, a variety of ways for parents to participate directly in the education of their children, and attention to the needs of parents.**

- **Comprehensive services - provision or referral to services such as health services (screening for developmental delays and physical examinations), special education services, social services (referral to community or governmental agencies that can provide needed assistance), and transportation.**

6. **What forms of teacher preparation and certification should be required?**

The early childhood community and the research on quality of care have reached one unanimous conclusion: teachers of young children must have specific training in early childhood development. Currently elementary teachers would need additional education in early childhood education to ensure that programs are not simply downward extensions of elementary teaching. A variety of studies have found that the quality of care is a function of specific training in early childhood, not of the number of years of education. One implication is that preschool programs need not be totally staffed with college graduates, and that individuals with appropriate community college certificates and degrees, or with Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials, are appropriate teachers. One common possibility for state certification might be, for example, a classroom with one teacher and one aide, who can be distinguished by their experience, skill. and the extent of their early childhood training, but not necessarily by their years of formal schooling.

Recommendation for Consideration

The ADE should study and consider a differentiated staffing model of early childhood professional preparation taking into consideration the model being discussed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Section IV

Critical Task Force Considerations

The Task Force determined that the main objective of its work was to articulate the rationale and policy options for the development of preschool programs for at-risk three- and four-year-olds. However, early childhood education is not like an inoculation. Primary grades (K-3) must also be responsive to the developmental needs of young children. Task Force members believe that the following other important early childhood concerns affecting primary grade children must be considered.

Primary Grade Curriculum (K-3)

Early childhood is generally defined as the years from birth through age eight. Over the past few years, many schools have narrowed the primary grade curriculum and adopted instructional approaches that are actually harmful to many young children and incompatible with current knowledge about how young children learn and develop. In general, the upper elementary school curriculum has been moved down into the primary grades and the learning of academic skills is often emphasized rather than active learning in a meaningful context.

One of the most important premises of child development is that all domains of development; physical, social, emotional, and cognitive are integrated. This premise is violated when schools place a great emphasis on the congnitive domain while minimizing other aspects of children's development. Because development cannot be neatly separated into parts, failure to attend to all aspects of an individual child's development is often the root

cause of a young child's failure in school. **The ADE must take a leadership role in assisting school districts in resolving the dichotomy between current knowledge of how young children learn and the instructional practice in many primary grades. The position papers on developmentally appropriate curriculum and the set of guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children should be used as the basis of the curriculum recommendations.**

Parent Involvement

Schools that welcome parents are particularly important for young children. Parent involvement is linked to a child's future school success and if parents become linked to the school at the beginning of their child's education, they have a far greater chance of continuing their involvement throughout the child's school years. Task Force members believe that it is essential that parents become an integral part of the educational team at the earliest possible time and be helped to realize their important role. Members agree with the following recommendations of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Task Force on Early Childhood Education (20).

- Schools must promote an environment in which parents are valued as primary influences in their children's lives and are essential partners in the education of their children.
- Schools must recognize that the self-esteem of parents is integral to the development of the child and should be enhanced by the parents' positive interaction with the school.
- Schools must assure opportunities and access for parents to observe and volunteer in the classroom.

- Schools must promote an exchange of information and ideas between parents and teachers which will benefit the child.

Task Force members believe that ADE should provide materials and technical assistance to school districts related to parental involvement in schools, communication between parents and schools, and the provision of family support and education programs.

Assessment Practices

As primary grade curricula have become more formal, the use of standardized tests has increased. Because primary grade children are not experienced test takers, paper and pencil tests administered to large groups and under stressful conditions rarely yield valid and meaningful results. Teachers waste valuable time "teaching for the test" rather than focusing on the developmental needs of children, and this has a serious, detrimental effect on the curriculum and the children (22).

Testing is now used in many school districts at the onset of kindergarten to exclude children, in part to protect them from a curriculum that is inappropriate for them. This type of testing differs from appropriate developmental screening which can be used to identify individual children who have special needs and who might profit from special needs services. Most early childhood experts agree that developmental or "readiness testing" should not be used to determine placement in what may be perceived as homogeneous groups, and new ways need to be found to serve children which do not stigmatize them and create a sense of failure at a young age. The Task Force recommendations for developmentally appropriate curriculum in the primary grades would

reduce many of the current problems such as identifying children not ready for school and the early retention of children.

Task Force members were also concerned over inappropriate use of standardized tests in the primary grades. Members urge that no one test ever be used as the basis for important decisions about a child. Teachers, administrators, legislators, and parents should fully appreciate that the most accurate assessment of a child's progress is based on observation of a child over time with input from parents supplemented by individualized testing only when necessary (23).

ADE should take the lead in consulting with experts in early childhood education and measurement to assure that primary grade test instruments, training, and administration are consistent with appropriate purposes and uses of the tests, as well as support of the development of alternatives to standardized tests for young children.

Staff Certification, Development, and Training

Under the current system, all teachers employed in public school primary grades must have elementary certification, but are not required to have specific training in child development/early childhood education. Task Force members concur with the well researched principle that teachers simply do a much better job of teaching young children when they have specialized training in child development and early childhood education. Arizona's current state certification requirements do not differentiate early childhood teaching from elementary teaching. This is particularly a problem when certified elementary teachers who have no

experience or training with primary grade children are allowed to teach this age group.

Task Force members recognize that in some communities it may be difficult to hire teachers who meet certification requirements and also have experience with the age group, particularly for class rooms serving preschool children. Members recommend that when teachers lack this experience, they should be supervised and supported by a qualified teacher with appropriate experience.

Specifically, ADE should recommend to the State Board the following:

- That well-defined Early Childhood Certification opportunities for teachers of children in pre-kindergarten through third grade should be put in place.

- That consideration be given to implementing the Early Childhood Endorsement process as developed by the state Board's K-3 committee. This voluntary endorsement would serve the purpose of ensuring that teachers already certified to teach K-8 would be appropriately prepared to teach young children.

- That consideration be given to reviewing the necessary requirements for administrative certification to be sure to include demonstrated knowledge and competence in providing leadership in early childhood education.

- That consideration be given to recommending that schools develop remuneration schedules which compensate all teaching and support staff in early childhood programs equivalent to that of other school staff with comparable education, credentials, training and experience.

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